**Change Into Christlikeness**

Colossians 3:12-14

**Introduction**

A change of clothes accompanies a change of position. When Joseph was called out of the dungeon in Egypt, he was given a change of clothes before he appeared before Pharaoh; prison clothes do not belong in a palace. When the prodigal son returned home, his father requested a change of clothes for his son; dirty hog pen clothes do not belong at the father’s table. Once Lazarus was raised from the dead, Jesus instructed them to take him out of the grave clothes; grave clothes do not belong on the living.

When you trusted Christ as your Savior, you changed positions in life. You were in a place worse than the dungeon of Egypt, but now you stand redeemed. You were in a way of life that was worse than life in a hog pen, but now you are clean. You were dead in trespasses and sins, but now you are alive! Why would you continue living the way you used to live? If you understand who you are in Christ, why would you continue to act like a lost person?

Paul used a change of clothes to illustrate the change that has come to a Christian’s life. Anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication, and lying destroy relationships. The new ways of life build relationships. As Christians, we should put off “going off” because it throws everything off. If your way of dealing with people fits the fashion of the world…If you are hurting someone with your speech…If you won’t look at someone…If you have written someone off…If you are tired of dealing with people…If you have a short-temper…If you are talking bad about someone…If you want to see someone suffer….If you can’t let something go…If you are constantly arguing with your spouse, your children, your parents, your brother, your sister, your boss, your friends, your fiancé, your neighbor, your co-workers, your fellow church members…then it is time to change into Christlikeness! What does a change into Christlikeness look like in relationships?

1. **Your apparel should reflect your position as a Christian. (v. 12a)** 
   1. Paul used the same motivation to prompt them to put on that which reflects the life of the new man.
      1. “Put on” means to dress or clothe; it is imperative, indicating it is a choice.
      2. They should be motivated by who Christ is. He is all that matters.
      3. They should be motivated by the fact that they are in Christ.
      4. Social differences have been put away in Christ. (v. 11)
   2. Who they are in Christ has changed who they are. “therefore as…” They are elect, holy, set apart, and beloved.
      * 1. What is fitting for someone who is in such a position?
      1. They are to wear that which is characteristic of Christ. “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” (Romans 13:14)
2. **As a Christian, you should be clothed with Christlike attitudes.**

Note: Paul had mentioned five ways of the old man that destroy relationships. Now he mentions five ways that build relationships.

* 1. Bowels of mercies – heartfelt emotion; tender compassion; pity; mercy; concern; sensitivity; a heart of mercy; tenderheartedness (Romans 12:1; 2 Corinthians 1:3)
  2. Kindness – a gracious attitude; helpfulness; goodness; generosity; “the art of being a dear” (Lord Hailsham). (Romans 2:4; Ephesians 2:7, Titus 3:4)
  3. Humbleness of mind – humility; lowliness; gentleness, “having a deep sense of one’s littleness” (Thayer); not harsh. (Acts 20:19, Philippians 2:3)
  4. Meekness – “not being overly impressed with a sense of one’s self-importance”; courtesy; considerateness; a quality of gentle friendliness; strength that accommodates to another's weakness; not rude or arrogant in approaching others. (2 Corinthians 10:1; Galatians 6:1)
  5. Longsuffering – patience; slowness in avenging wrongs (Thayer); self-restraint which does not hastily retaliate a wrong. (Lightfoot);long-tempered;not given to resentment or angry impulse in reaction to others. (Romans 2:4; 1 Timothy 1:16; 1 Peter 3:20)

1. **As a Christian, you should be clothed in Christlike actions.** 
   1. Forbearing one another – exercising self-restraint and tolerance; to endure patiently; to put up with; to bear with one another.
2. To forbear is to “restrain your natural reaction towards odd or difficult people” (Wright).
3. This is a “first and necessary step….Every Christian fellowship is made up of all kinds of people and we will accordingly sometimes find ourselves in close fellowship with people who are very different than we are. For the sake of maintaining community, we will sometimes have to put up with people with whom we would not normally choose to associate.” (Moo 279)
   1. Forgiving one another – dealing generously or graciously with another; to pardon.
      1. The words “if any man have a quarrel against any” means a complaint which implies blame.
      2. In the course of church life, there will be times you have a grievance or cause for complaint. What should you do? You should forgive since you have been forgiven. Follow the example of the Savior who graciously forgives; you should forgive since Christ forgives.
   2. Using the clothing illustration, Paul instructs them to put on charity above all these things.
      1. “Above all” implies as an outer garment or belt that brings it all together.
      2. Charity – concern; interest; high regard and appreciation for.
      3. Bond – that which binds or holds something together; sinews.
      4. Perfectness – completeness; maturity.
      5. Regarding the “bond of perfectness,” there are two basic possibilities: The perfect bond; that which holds everything together, or the bond that produces maturity.
   3. This type of Christianity will build relationships, whether in a marriage, a family, a work environment, a classroom, or a church.
4. **Central Idea: Since the Colossian believers are in Christ, they should be clothed with Christlike attitudes and actions.**
5. Sometimes I am amazed at what people wear. It makes you wonder, “What are they thinking? You’re not going to go out like that are you?” It is even more grievous when a Christian acts like a lost person!
6. We’ve all seen matching puzzles or exam questions, where you must draw a line to match the items in a list to the word or characteristic that describes it. If someone had a list of the qualities of Christ on one side and the attitudes and actions of your life on the other side, could they make a connection between the two?
7. We must demonstrate Christ’s love.
   * 1. Is there a connection between the way Jesus cared for sinners and the way you care for sinners?
     2. Is there a connection between how Jesus feels about the local church and the way you feel about the local church?
     3. Is there a resemblance between the way Jesus treated his mom and the way you treat your mom?
     4. Is there a similarity between the way you treat your enemies and the way Jesus treats his enemies?
     5. Is there a connection between the way Jesus treats others and the way you treat others?

**Conclusion**

Whose fashion are you wearing? Do you have the heart of Christ for people? Do your actions reflect Christ? If there is not a resemblance, it is time to change into Christlikeness!